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THE
TEACHINGS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE,

ON SOME POINTS IN THE DOCTRINES OF

REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND
PRAYER:

WITH

The Published Opinions thereon

OF THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, M.A.,

AND

THE REV. JAMES CAUGHEY.

To which is prefixed

AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, "WHO IS A GOSPEL MINISTER?"

"THAT we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." EPHESIANS iv. 14.

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the OLD PATHS, where is the GOOD WAY, and walk therein, and ye shall FIND REST for your souls." JEREMIAH iv. 16.

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WHO IS A GOSPEL MINISTER ?

JOHN WESLEY.—“ WHO IS A GOSPEL MINISTER ?” Let us consider this question calmly, in the fear and in the presence of God.

“ Not every one that talks *largely* and *earnestly* on these precious subjects,—the righteousness and blood of Christ. Let a man descant upon these in ever so lively a manner ; let him describe his sufferings ever so pathetically ; if he stops there ; if he does not show man’s duty, as well as Christ’s sufferings ; if he does not apply all to the consciences of the hearers, he will never lead them to life here or hereafter, and therefore is no Gospel Minister.

“ Not every one who deals in *the promises* only, without ever showing *the terrors of the law* ; that *slides over* the WRATH of GOD, revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, and endeavours to HEAL THOSE THAT NEVER WERE WOUNDED. These PROMISE-MONGERS are no Gospel Ministers.

“ Not every one (very nearly allied to the former) who bends all his strength to *coax sinners* to Christ. Such soft tender expressions as, ‘ My dear hearers,’ ‘ my dear lambs,’ though repeated a thousand times, do not prove a Gospel Minister.

“ Lastly : not every one that preaches justification by faith ; he that goes no further than this, that does not insist upon sanctification also, upon all the *fruits of faith*, upon *universal holiness*, does not declare the WHOLE COUNSEL of GOD, and consequently is not a Gospel Minister.

“ Who then is such ? Who is a Gospel Minister in the full scriptural sense of the word ? He, *and he alone*, of whatever denomination, that does declare the WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD, that does preach the whole gospel, even justification and sanctification, preparatory to glory. He that does not put asunder what God has joined, but publishes *alike*, ‘ Christ dying for us, and Christ living in us.’ He that constantly applies all this to the heart of the hearers, being willing to spend and to be spent for them, having himself the mind which was in Christ, and steadily walking as Christ also walked, he and he alone can with propriety be termed a Gospel Minister.”—WESLEY’s WORKS, Vol. X., pages 437—8 ; 4th Edit.

TEACHINGS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

REPENTANCE.

Does God create Repentance in Man, or does Man originate it in himself?

HOLY SCRIPTURE. "Him hath God exalted, with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give *repentance* unto Israel, and remission of sins." (Acts v. 31.) "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted *repentance* unto life." (Acts xi. 18.) "And when he" (the Spirit of truth) "is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me." (John xvi. 8, 9.)

JOHN WESLEY. "To express the matter briefly, it is certain that no human spirit, while it is in the body, *can persuade another to repent*,—can work in him an entire change, both of heart and life,—a change from universal wickedness to universal holiness. And suppose that spirit discharged from the body, it is no more able to do this than it was before. No power less than that which created it at first can create a soul anew..... God alone can raise those that are 'dead in trespasses and sins.'"—WORKS, Vol. VII., page 242.

JAMES CAUGHEY. "'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' (Zech. iv. 6.) Christ has *the key* to the human heart, but *he must turn it*, or it will remain obstinately and for ever shut against all the preaching that may be thundered at the door. The *weightiest truth* could accomplish *nothing* without the *direct agency* of the Spirit. Without this influence, the words of the preacher would fall like feathers, or flakes of snow, upon the congregation, and with a similar effect."—LETTERS, Vol. III., page 266. Again: "I know *not one* of all our ministers and members" (of the American Methodist Episcopal Church) "who would not *heartily agree* with that scriptural sentiment of Dr. Clarke: 'All this *scriptural* and rational *preaching* will be of *no avail* unless another means, of God's own choosing, be superadded to give it an effect,—the influence of the Holy Spirit,—that Spirit, that convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment.'"—LETTERS, Vol. IV., page 185.

Do all Mr. Caughey's English friends *now* agree with this? It is the sinner's duty to use this gift of repentance, and he can either use it or "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness." No one puts out man's work in repentance. Are there not some who deny God's work in it, and thus dishonour the Holy Spirit?

Is it wrong for a Penitent to pray?

HOLY SCRIPTURE. "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. *I tell you this man went down to his house justified.*" (Luke xviii. 13, 14.)

If a penitent ought not to pray, has not Jesus misled his followers by telling them that this praying penitent was justified when praying? Jesus said expressly that he "went up into the temple to pray." Did not Peter tell unconverted Simon Magus to become a penitent and pray?

HOLY SCRIPTURE. "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God, *repent, therefore,* and PRAY God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee; for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." (Acts viii. 21—23.)

Are Christians not to give the same directions as inspired apostles?

JOHN WESLEY. "And first, *all* who desire the grace of God are to *wait for it in prayer*. This is the express direction of our Lord himself. In his Sermon on the Mount, after explaining at large wherein religion consists, and describing the main branches of it, he adds, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.' (Matt. vii. 7, 8.) Here we are, in the plainest manner, directed to ask, in order to, or as a means of, receiving; to seek, in order to find, the grace of God, the pearl of great price; and to knock, to continue asking and seeking, if we would enter into his kingdom. 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.' (Luke xi. 13.) It should be particularly observed here, that *the persons directed to ask, had not then received the Holy Spirit*; nevertheless, our Lord directed them to use this means, and promises that it should be effectual; that, upon asking, they should receive the Holy Spirit."—WORKS, Vol. V., pages 178—9.

JAMES CAUGHEY. "Be patient, restless, resigned, yet *vehement* in your supplications for mercy," is the advice Mr. Caughey gave to a penitent.—LETTERS, Vol. IV., page 264. Again: "The confessions of some of these *awakened sinners*, while pleading for mercy at the communion rail, are sometimes

most affecting. The other night an old sinner, with his wife, was kneeling among the penitents. His agony was very great. One of the leaders overheard him pray thus : ‘ O Lord, I have never offered up one prayer for thirty years. About six months ago my son was converted ; since then I have been trying to alter my course of life. But I have been a wicked sinner ; I have committed all kinds of wickedness. O Lord, canst thou have mercy upon such a sinner as me ? Thou knowest what a *rascal* I have been. What an *oud Sabbath-breaker*. O Lord, have mercy on me ! ’ On being informed that his wife had obtained mercy from Heaven, he exclaimed, ‘ O Lord, must I go to hell *be me sen* ? ’ The agony into which he immediately entered proved that he was determined to accompany his old woman to a better region. At length, with heaven beaming in his face, he cried out, ‘ Oh ! I feel something come into my heart ! I feel that the Lord has sent a great light into my dark soul. The Lord has removed my load ; he has pardoned all my sins for Christ’s sake. What a mercy that the Lord should have mercy on such an *oud feller* as me ! ’ —LETTERS, Vol. IV., page 302.

We are surely *all agreed* to direct a penitent to **BELIEVE IN JESUS**, but who will decline to urge him to pray ? Who will give up the old-fashioned and scriptural way of urging him to **PRAY IN FAITH** for mercy ? Can those who say that no unconverted person should pray, object to carry out the doctrine in their own families ? Yet how would they like to hear little Tommy and Mary say, “ Father, we are never going to say our prayers at night and morning again, because we are unconverted ? ”

FAITH.

Is saving Faith a simple Belief of the gospel Truth respecting Jesus, or is it a heart-felt Trust and Reliance on his Atonement for Salvation ?

HOLY SCRIPTURE. “ Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him ; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue : for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” (John xii. 42, 43.)

Had not these chief rulers *simple faith*, for they “ believed on him ? ” Had they had *saving faith*, would they not have confessed Jesus ? and would they have “ loved the praise of men more than the praise of God ? ” Is there not a difference then between *simple faith* and *saving faith* ?

HOLY SCRIPTURE. “ If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. x. 9, 10.) “ That we should be to the praise of his glory,

who first *trusted* in Christ. In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." (Ephes. i. 12, 13.)

JOHN WESLEY. "Is every one who is convinced of the reality of this fact, 'Jesus is the Christ,' a gospel believer? Is not the devil convinced of the reality of this fact? Is then the devil a gospel believer? I was convinced of the reality of this fact when I was twelve years old, *when I was without God in the world.*"—WORKS, Vol. XII., page 241. Again: "Christian faith is, then, *not only an assent* to the whole gospel of Christ, but also *a full reliance* on the blood of Christ; *a trust* in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection; *a recumbency upon him* as our atonement and our life, as given for us and living in us; and, in consequence hereof, a closing with him, and cleaving to him, as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; or, in one word, our salvation."—WORKS, Vol. V., page 7.

JAMES CAUGHEY. "Now faith is an *act of the mind*; it is a *consent of the will*, and a *reliance of the soul*; it implies both *assent* and *trust*."—LETTERS, Vol. IV., page 32. Again: "Faith is not a *passive* but an *active* state of the mind. Active faith is always effectual. When genuine, it is always distinct, and put forth for some particular object. A particular faith for a particular blessing was what Christ required, and that which he honoured. *This sort of faith*, when exercised for justification or sanctification, is denominated, by the apostle, **SAVING FAITH**, or the faith through which we are saved." (Ephes. ii. 8.)—LETTERS, Vol. IV., pages 215, 216.

Is saving Faith the Gift of God? or, is it a natural Power belonging equally to the converted and unconverted?

HOLY SCRIPTURE. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth *no good thing*: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." (Rom. vii. 18.)

If saving faith had been in the "wretched man," would not an *un-speakably "GOOD THING"* have been in his **CORRUPT** soul?

HOLY SCRIPTURE. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Ephes. ii. 8.)

Is not every thing connected with salvation "*of grace*," and nothing of sinful man?

JOHN WESLEY. "God *gives me the power* to believe. But does he believe for me? He *works faith in me*. But still, is it not I that believe?"—WORKS, Vol. XII., page 241.

How clearly does Mr. Wesley here state, that while God *gives the power*,

of saving faith, man uses the power which God gives, or he cannot be saved.

Do not all theologians who hold that saving faith is not only a *simple assent* to the truths respecting Jesus, but a *heart-felt trust* and reliance on the atonement for salvation, also hold, that saving faith is the gift of God? Is it not a striking proof that errors grow in clusters, when we find that those who deny the Holy Spirit's work in faith generally reject his work in *repentance and regeneration?*

PRAYER.

Should Believers pray with and for Penitents?

HOLY SCRIPTURE. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, *when they were come down, prayed for them,* that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)" (Acts viii. 14—16.)

JOHN WESLEY. "Perceiving this was an acceptable time, I laid aside my design of meeting the society, and *continued in prayer* with the whole congregation.....One cried out, 'My God ! my God ! thou hast forgotten me.' Having spoken thus she sank to the earth. We called upon God in her behalf. The cries both of her and several others, mourning after God, redoubled. But *we continued wrestling with God in prayer* till he gave us an answer of peace."—WORKS, Vol. II., page 134. Again: "I preached on these words in the second lesson: 'We know that we are of God.' One sunk down, and another, and another. Some cried aloud in *agony of prayer*. I would *willingly have spent some time in prayer with them*, but my voice failed."—WORKS, Vol. II., page 486.

JAMES CAUGHEY. A person wrote to Mr. Caughey,—“I certainly thought they were engaged in a row, or fight, in the band room of — chapel, the other night.” Mr. Caughey replied: “Did you go in to see what the matter was? and, when you discovered the real cause of the uproar, did you sympathize with *distressed sinners?* did you *fall down before God in the midst of them*, and *pray* for the opening of the prison to those who were bound, that those who were mourning in Zion might have ‘beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness?’ (Isaiah lxi. 3.) If you did not *thus pray*, when you had an opportunity; and if, instead, you walked away, despising in your heart those who did, *I cannot consider you worthy the name of a METHODIST.*”—LETTERS, Vol. IV., page 115.